



TOWN OF CHINCOTEAGUE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted June 20, 2002

PREPARED BY:
CHINCOTEAGUE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TOWN OF CHINCOTEAGUE

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I. INTRODUCTION

The local commission shall prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction and every governing body shall adopt a comprehensive plan for the territory under its jurisdiction.

In the preparation of a comprehensive plan the Commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of probable future requirements of its territory and inhabitants. The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants.

The comprehensive plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be.

The plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter, shall show the commission's long-range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan, it may include, but need not be limited to:

1. The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, business, industrial, agricultural, mineral resources, conservation, recreation, public service, flood plain and drainage, and other areas;
2. The designation of a system of transportation facilities such as streets, roads, highways, parkways, bridges, ports, terminals, and other like facilities;
3. The designation of a system of community service facilities such as parks, forest, schools, playgrounds, public buildings and institutions, hospitals, community centers, waterworks, sewerage disposal or waste disposal areas, and the like;
4. The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal or other treatment;
5. The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable ground water protection measures;
6. An official map, a capital improvements program, a subdivision ordinance, a zoning ordinance and zoning district maps, mineral resources district maps and agricultural and forest district maps, where applicable;
7. The location of existing or proposed recycling center; and
8. The designation of areas for the implementation of measures to promote the construction and maintenance of affordable housing, sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality while

considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated.

Code of Virginia Title 15.2-2223

A Comprehensive Plan is a vehicle for local government officials and citizens to express their goals for the future of their respective communities. It is a means to anticipate and deal constructively with the inevitable changes occurring within a community. Citizens engage in planning in order to understand what has happened and why, and then to use that knowledge to Influence future development.

Because the history of a community ultimately results in a community's present and future, the plan includes an analysis of past trends and development. By using this information on how we got where we are we can design more effective policies to get us where we would like to be.

The Plan is designed to be a "living" document. This means that a plan is supposed to reflect recent information. With that in mind, the State Code calls for the review of the existing Plan at least once every five years. The Code also allows amendments to the Plan any time the governing body feels such action is warranted, which means that the entire Plan could conceivably be rewritten each year.

The Comprehensive Plan has five basic parts: an inventory of Natural Features, an Inventory of Community Factors, a review of Public Facilities and Utilities, a Statement of Goals and Objectives, and a discussion of Future Community Development. In addition, a special section, Annexation, has been included.

A. INVENTORY OF NATURAL FEATURES

The Inventory of Natural Features reviews such factors as climate, geology, physiography, fast lands soils, groundwater, surface water and wetlands. Chincoteague Island is closely tied to the surrounding environment. Two of the largest sources of employment in the Town, tourism and seafood, are both closely related to the productive capacity and attractiveness of the surrounding estuaries and ocean. Local residents also depend upon the natural environment to fulfill many of their basic needs, such as the need for safe, clean drinking water, and the need to dispose of sewerage. At the same time, the natural environment can be both a fragile friend and a destructive enemy. The effects of storms, tides, and winds can cause enormous financial losses. The fragility of the marshes and wildlife habitats can be seriously altered by inconsiderate or uncontrolled use. All residents and property owners should express their collective concern and regard for new and existing development and should insist on the wise use of opportunities presented by the natural environment.

B. INVENTORY OF COMMUNITY FACTORS:

The character residents give a Town through the ways they choose to use the land in that Town is another key determinant of individual and community well being. The size and layout of parcels of land, the structures built on the land, connecting streets, the compatibility of individual buildings with their neighborhoods, signs, roads, sidewalks, and the availability of key services such as water and sewage disposal, can all add to, or detract from, the level of well-being the community provides to each resident. This section of the plan discusses land uses, neighborhood areas, public facilities, and transportation in Chincoteague.

C. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND UTILITIES:

The quality of life of any individual is determined, to a large degree, by the environment in which he or she lives. The term "environment" in this context includes all those man-made Improvements and/or services which the corporate Town owns/operates/provides for its citizens. This section reviews these facilities and services and comments on their applicability to that quality of life.

D. ANNEXATION:

On July 1, 1989 the Town of Chincoteague, which, until that time, consisted of approximately 25% of the Island of Chincoteague, annexed the 75% of the Island, which was unincorporated.

E. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

The Goals and Objectives represent the key element of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission, In formulating these Goals and Objectives, has taken into account the Issues identified In the Inventories of Natural Features and Community Factors, and has added to this their own knowledge of the attitudes and desires of local residents for the future development of Chincoteague. (The Commission will also incorporate comments presented during the public hearing phase of this Plan.)

F. FUTURE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

The last section of the plan develops a future land use proposal. This section tries to identify the type of future growth that will enhance the overall community. Whether or not Chincoteague will adopt, adapt and grow in the manner identified in this final section of the plan depends on actions of both private citizens and current and future Town Councils.

While we do not expect that all Issues have been covered or that citizens will agree on all or even any of the possible solutions that are discussed herein, we do hope that this effort will stimulate thought followed by constructive action resulting in an improvement of the quality of life for us and the generations to come.

The Commission readily admits that it has plagiarized and/or paraphrased much of the enclosed material. We have used as our sources the Code Of Virginia, the 1982 1992 Town of Chincoteague Comprehensive Plan, the Report on the Town of Chincoteague - County of Accomack Settlement Agreement (annexation), and numerous other documents, reports, letters, memos and etc. We apologize to their authors for any errors contained herein.

II. INVENTORY OF NATURAL FEATURES

A. CLIMATE:

Chincoteague Island has a humid climate, with no distinct dry season. The relative humidity (measured at nearby Wallops Flight Facility) averages 76%. Spring is least humid, with an average of 78 to 79% from August through September. Daily averages vary from 83% in early morning to 66% in the afternoon.

Surface winds are highly variable and frequent. Winds are predominately from the south or southeast in the summer, and westerly or northwesterly in the winter. The average wind velocity is 9 to 10 mph in the summer, and 11 to 13 mph in winter. Average precipitation for Chincoteague is 45-46 Inches per year.

At Norfolk, the nearest source of such information, the annual mean number of clear days averages 109, with 103 partially cloudy days, and 153 cloudy days. The average percent of possible sunshine is 63%.

Two general types of storms affect the area: hurricanes and northeasters. On the average, once a year a tropical storm of hurricane force passes within 250 miles of Chincoteague. Hurricanes are a threat from May through November. Nearly 80% occur in the months of August, September, and October, and about 40% strike in September alone. Hurricanes cause damage from winds and tidal surge. If the storm hits during high tide, a higher surge will occur. If the tide is ebbing, however, flooding will be less. This vertical range of tidal change represents a storage pool.

Northeasters are storms with strong on-shore winds from a northeast direction. The winds are persistent, causing above normal tides for long periods of time. The March 1962 northeaster caused 10 to 15 foot waves, persisted for five tide cycles, and caused inundation and wave damage for 60 hours.

B. GEOLOGY:

Chincoteague Island is commonly believed to be an ancient barrier island. It was built some 4,000 years ago, as the forces of wind, waves, and ocean current deposited sand

parallel to the Eastern Shore mainland. Erosion formed breaks in these barrier Islands and allowed the still rising sea to flood the flatlands behind the Island. These flats are now the marshes, channels and bays between Chincoteague and the mainland.

Between 2,000 and 4,000 years ago, scientists believe Assateague Island joined the north end of Chincoteague Island. An Inlet formed, separating the two islands, and continued sand deposits caused a spit to build southward from the Assateague side of the Chincoteague-Assateague Inlet. This spit grew and eventually formed a south neck. This neck grew between Chincoteague Island and the sea, located around today's Assateague Channel. Its successor, Tom's Cove Hook, is following a much similar growth pattern as the one that formed Chincoteague Island.

C. PHYSIOGRAPHY:

As Exhibit 1 shows, most of Chincoteague Island's shoreline is in marshlands. Numerically, nearly 85% of the Island's 31.6 miles of shoreline is marshlands with another 11.2% consisting of artificially stabilized shoreline made up of bulk heading and riprap along commercial waterfronts and privately owned areas. In many of these places the shoreline has been built out or filled in, and many piers extend out into the water.

The fast land of the Island above the shoreline is typically flat. In fact, elevations on the Island rarely exceed 10 feet. The higher ridges on the Island run northeast to southwest along the length of the Island, again giving evidence to the barrier island origin of the Island. As remnant sand dunes, these upland ridges are composed of well-sorted sand particles - and as a result are high in strength, low in compressibility, and highly permeable and porous. In layman's terms, if these areas are protected from winds and waves, they can bear heavy loads, and will drain water quickly.

Off shore, the bottom of the bays surrounding the Island also have mild slope. Except where dredged, Chincoteague Bay is shallow, with four feet or less of water, and the bottom is soft. Muddy and in some places marshy tidal flats extend from shore into the bays. Only in Chincoteague Channel and Assateague Channel does the bottom drop off quickly. Chincoteague Channel, a dredged channel paralleling the western edge of the Island, averages 13 feet in depth, with 6 inch to 4 foot shoals. Maintenance dredging of Chincoteague Channel and adjacent waterways need to be continually scheduled to keep them navigable. Assateague Channel, on the eastern edge of the Island, has a maximum depth of 21 feet. This channel is narrow, bordered by mud flats and oyster rocks. Between Piney Island and Janey's Marsh Creek it is only four feet in depth.

Fortunately, most of Chincoteague Island is not experiencing shoreline erosion. However, some locations around Chincoteague are experiencing severe rates of erosion (greater than 3 feet per year). Moderate erosion (1 to 3 foot per year) is occurring above Black Point Landing in Assateague Channel. No structures are in immediate danger in either location.

D. FASTLAND SOILS:

Exhibit 2 identifies five basic soil complexes on Chincoteague Island. The numbers in Table 2 match the numbered soil types In Exhibit 2. As Exhibit 2 shows, very poorly drained Bohicket tidal marsh soils surround much of the upland, and extend Inland in the drainage ways between the upland areas. These soils characteristically are very compressible, consolidate under a load, have high water content, and are poorly drained. As a result, these areas are unsuited for development.

The higher Duckston sand soils represent somewhat better conditions for development. These soils cover the central portion of Piney Island, areas along the waterfront in the center of the Town, and inland from Assateague Channel. Even though these land areas are considered upland, and have been developed in many areas, they are still poorly drained soils subject to flooding, wetness, and seepage.

The best soils on the Island in terms of development are called Pactolus soils. These soils are the best drained, although problems of flooding and wetness occur. These soils extend along Rt. 175 (Main Street) and Willow Street, along Chicken City Road, between Deep Hole Road and Oyster Bay, and are also found around the harbor near Chincoteague Point. Exhibit 3 shows the extent of these better-drained soils by themselves.

(See page 13 for TABLE 2: SOIL DESCRIPTIONS)

TABLE 1 - MARSHLANDS

	MAPMARSH	ACRES	SC	SW	SMS	SB	OBSERVATIONS
#	LOCATION		%	%	%	%	
1	WILDCAT MARSH	654	85	5	5	5	Extensive peninsular and embayed marsh system, ancient beach ridges
2	WOODS GROVE	23	75	10	10	10	Point marsh and island
3	OYSTER BAY	28	95	—	5	—	Narrow marsh between old beach ridges
4	LITTLE OYSTER BAY	27	90	10	—	—	Low marsh fringe and islands
5	EEL CREEK	66	90	3	2	5	Broad creek marsh, Rt. 2113 crossing, evidence of fill
6	SHEEPSHEAD CREEK	219	97	1	1	1	Intertidal marsh interrupted by causeway
7	BLACK POINT LANDING	18	30	—	20	50	Embayed marsh-large saltbrush community
8	LOWER CHINCOTEAGUE IS.	350	81	8	5	5	High parts of marsh have been filled
9	CHINCOTEAGUE POINT	67	80	3	7	8	Marsh Island, disturbed soil piles, severe erosion
10	CHINCOTEAGUE CHANNEL	12	80	3	10	7	Intertidal low marsh islands
11	CHINCOTEAGUE CHANNEL	4	100	—	—	—	
12	BLACK NARROW	24	95	—	3	2	Low marsh island, spoil and buildings on NE island
13	CHINCOTEAGUE	65	95	3	2	—	Low marsh island, spoil pile on the lower end

SC - Salt marsh Cord grass (*Spartina Alterniflora*)

SW - Saltwort (*Salicornia*)

SMS - Saltmeadow Hay - Salt Grasses (*Spartina Patens*)

SB - Saltbrushes (*Iva Frutesans*)

The uses of the four types of marsh grass that make up over 99% of the marshes surrounding Chincoteague are as follows:

SC - Saltmarsh Cordgrass Community

A. Average yield 4 tons per acre per year (10 tons acre/year maximum)

B. Optimum availability of detritus to the marine environment

C. Roots and rhizomes eaten by waterfowl and stems used in muskrat lodge construction

Also serves as nesting material for various birds

D. Deterrent to shoreline erosion

E. Serves as sediment trap and assimilates floodwaters

SW - Saltwort Community

- A. Less than ½ ton per acre per year
- B. Little value to aquatic or marsh animals

SMS - Saltmeadow Hay - Salt Grasses

- A. 1-3 tons per acre per year
- B. Food (seeds) and nesting area for birds
- C. Effective erosion deterrent
- D. Assimilates floodwaters
- E. Filters sediment and waste material

SB - Saltbrushes

- A. Two tons acre per year or less
- B. Nesting area for small birds and habitat for a variety of wildlife
- C. Effective trap for flotsam

TABLE 2: SOIL DESCRIPTIONS

<u>Map Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>General Description</u>
(1) 15	Tidal Marsh, Bohicket	Very poorly drained soils flooded by seawater daily. Very slow permeability. Unsuitable for development.
(2) 15-20	Tidal Marsh-Duckston Complex	Tidal marsh mixed with poorly drained sands. Flooding wetness and poor filter characteristics are common.
(3) 20	Duckston Sand	Poorly drained sands, flooding, wetness and seepage occur.
(4) 19-20	Pactolus-Duckston Complex	Mixed sands on uplands. Rapid permeability, seasonal high water table of 1.5 - 2.5 ft.
(5) 19	Pactolus Loamy Fine Sand	Moderately well drained to somewhat poorly drained. Problems of wetness and flooding occur. The best soils on the Island for development.

E. GROUNDWATER:

Chincoteague Island residents are totally dependent upon underground wells on

the mainland for drinking water. Wallops Flight Facility, a U. S. Government installation, controls the land where the Island's well field is located. Five miles of transmission lines carry water from these wells across the marshes to the Island.

Eight separate well fields serve the pumping station. Depths vary from 63 to 256 feet. A closed Accomack County landfill is located within two miles of the well fields. There has been no evidence of leaching from the landfill. While the danger of contamination of these wells is considered minimal, vigilant monitoring of activities on land near the wells is critical. The Town must also insure that future activities on or around the Wallops Flight Facility's property do not pose a danger to the wells. (See "Water", item N, page 30, below for more information on the Town's water supply.)

F. SURFACE WATER:

Freshwater from rain falling on Chincoteague drains generally in north-south directions over the low glades between the higher sand dune ridges. Since the Island is so flat, open and clear drainage ways are critical. Filling of ditches important to the Island's drainage should not occur and, in fact, the Commission recommends that an ordinance or other developmental/maintenance tool control this kind of activity.

The saltwater bays surrounding the Island support a wide variety of marine and animal life. Shellfish such as oysters and clams are important to the livelihood of many local residents. These areas should be preserved in a natural, healthy state.

G. MARSHLANDS:

Exhibit 1 displays the major marsh areas that surround Chincoteague Island. The numbers in TABLE 1 correspond to the numbers in Exhibit 1. TABLE 1 shows the name, size, and dominant grasses for each major marsh area. All the marshes have high value for wildlife and wildfowl, and are closely associated with fish spawning and nursery areas. They also help to prevent erosion, are important to the shellfish industry, and help keep the shoreline stable.

III. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

A. DRAINAGE:

Due to the low elevation of the island, proper drainage requires constant attention. Storm water drainage is always a problem, especially during periods of heavy rainfall. Most of the uplands soils on the Island are sandy and tend to absorb water quickly. However, the Island is within 5-10 feet of sea level, and the soil becomes easily saturated. As a result, ponding occurs in low-lying areas.

Often water must await lower tides to flow from the drainage ditches on the Island into the surrounding water. Much work has been accomplished in improving our drainage situation, however the following recommendations still apply:

1. New development should not encroach on existing ditches needed for drainage. Rather, such development should enhance existing drainage facilities.
2. Where feasible, open ditches are favored over underground pipes. Initial costs and maintenance costs are lower. Well-maintained ditches may help low-lying soils to drain better.
3. As mentioned before, an ordinance should be written and adopted to control the filling of remaining drainage channels.

B. EDUCATION:

Chincoteague has both elementary, middle, and high school facilities, with the middle school and high school sharing the same buildings. The location of these schools on the Island is another asset to community life in the Town. The Town believes our Island schools are important and feels any effort to close them should be stopped. National studies have shown that size of the learning environment has an indirect affect on student learning (Klonsky, 1998). Other studies have indicated that students are more satisfied and there are fewer discipline problems in smaller community schools, like ours. The Town agrees with this and feels our community is strengthened by our schools. Island residents young and old continue to actively support the schools and the education of our young people.

Construction of a new elementary school is complete, however, in the new facility, certain areas, such as the gymnasium are inadequate for uses that are applied.

The Commission feels that the School Board should take action to construct a new gymnasium at the middle school location. Currently the students are conducting their activities in the gym located on Church Street at the old elementary school property.

C. FIRE/AMBULANCE PROTECTION:

In 1920 an arsonist's fire, which was started in Doughty's Store, consumed the

east side of Main St., including the Atlantic Hotel. In 1924 a fire that started in the Barrel Factory swept the west side of Main St. destroying the Big Store and the railroad dock. Deciding that they had had enough, the citizens of the Island passed the hat and were able to collect a total of \$4.31 as the start of a fund to form and equip the Island's first volunteer fire company.

Today the Island is served by the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company (CVFC), which is jointly supported by the Town and Accomack County. The Town makes an annual appropriation to the CVFC of \$7,500. The Town also appropriates \$10,000 for the purchase of a ladder fire truck. This commitment is for 10 years ending in fiscal year 2004. The Town also annually receives \$5,000 from the Virginia Fire Program. Accomack County appropriates approximately \$20,000 annually to the CVFC, with a large portion of that designated for the rescue squad.

It is noted that the Town's water distribution system and fire suppression capabilities of the CVFC are such that properties within the corporate limits are classified "6/9" by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) of Virginia. In terms of their exposure to fire loss. Approximately 95% of the island is rated "6" and 5% of the island is rated "9".

The split rating is determined as follows:

- A. Five road miles or less to responding fire station and with a hydrant within 1,000 feet, use the first letter listing protection class (6).
- B. Five road miles or less to responding fire station and with a hydrant more than 1,000 feet away, use the second letter listing protection class (9).

The ISO rating is based on a scale of "1" to "10" for comparison with other municipal fire protection systems and represents an Indication of a system's ability to defend against the major fire which may be expected in any given community. Where protection class "10" is assigned, there is usually no or minimal protection.

Protection class "1" represents a fire protection system of extreme capability. The principal features used by ISO in grading a community's fire system are water supply, fire department, fire communications, and fire safety control. The Town has installed additional fire hydrants and has added more than 5 miles of water main, to make improvements in the municipal water system. Such improvements should result in an improved ISO classification for all properties affected by those improvements. This should result in an improvement in the ISO classification, which, in turn, would decrease the fire insurance premiums charged property owners.

While all these completed and proposed improvements will improve fire suppression capabilities in the Town, it is recommended that the Town request the assistance of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs in evaluating the level of fire service which can be provided by the CVFC. The increase in water connections on the

Island, limited access to the Island, the reactivation of the 8" water transmission line and the distance from other fire departments indicate a need for such an evaluation.

D. FLOOD INSURANCE:

The National Flood Insurance Program, which is administered through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, enables property owners to purchase flood insurance through commercial insurance companies at rates subsidized by the federal government. The NFIP is based on an agreement between local jurisdictions and the federal government, which requires communities to reduce future flood risk to new construction in flood prone areas through the implementation of certain protective measures. These measures include the adoption of floodplain zoning provisions designed to limit damage to structures in flood hazard areas and the adoption of special building codes for affected areas.

The NFIP provides participants protection against catastrophic damage of loss from flooding. The prerequisites for participation in the NFIP, such as the above mentioned floodplain zoning and special building codes for flood hazard areas generally have a salutary effect on the character and development of an area.

The Town of Chincoteague participates in the NFIP.

The Mayor and Town Council have taken the necessary action to make application to ISO for flood insurance discounts to affect the entire Island.

E. HARBOR:

The Curtis Merritt Harbor of Refuge offers 30', 40' and 50' length slips to a total of 73 vessels. The Harbor is used by local and off-Island boaters for both working and recreational craft.

The Harbor Committee needs an aggressive plan to set aside monies from slip rent and accumulated interest for the long-term replacement of the facility. During fiscal year 2001, the Town on behalf of the Harbor Committee applied for a grant in the amount of \$400,000 to assist in the replacement of the facility. However, this effort was unsuccessful. The Town plans to continue applying for grants to assist in this effort.

The Harbor Committee set aside approximately \$49,000.00 (mostly interest) in fiscal year 2001. To date the Committee has been able to set aside approximately \$380,000.00. Should the Harbor obtain a grant for needed repairs, the matching funds will nearly deplete the Harbor's savings.

It has been pointed out by Harbor Committee members that both sides of the bulkheads at the facility have worms and is in serious need of repair.

There have also been a growing number of voices raised which point out that the harbor has the opportunity and the obligation to take corrective financial action now, and that the Harbor Committee should not expect taxpayers to replace the harbor at the end of its current lifetime, that such replacement is the responsibility of the current and succeeding Harbor Committees. The Commission shares this sentiment.

The Commission encourages the Harbor Committee to review their current financial health and make some tough, drastic changes. It would be very unfortunate if the Island were to lose the Harbor.

F. HEALTH CARE:

Two private physicians plus a medical center affiliated with Shore Memorial Hospital currently provide primary health care to Town residents. Due to the long travel distance to emergency hospital care, these physicians should be encouraged to continue to offer primary care services, including x-ray facilities, lab services, courier service to commercial labs, and trauma rooms to stabilize emergencies such as heart attacks until hospital facilities can be reached.

The Town should consider an active program to recruit, support and retain physicians.

G. MOSQUITO CONTROL:

The Town has a Mosquito Control Committee charged with the control of mosquitoes. The cost of this control effort is provided by a \$.05 per \$100 of assessed valuation on real property in the Town.

The Town has improved the drainage along the main canals in the center of the Island and also the private drainage ditches, which have lessened the impact of mosquitoes and the diseases carried by them on the Island.

The Mosquito Control Committee is currently trying to educate the public and the visiting public on mosquito borne diseases.

H. POLICE PROTECTION:

Since the law enforcement activities of Virginia towns augment those provided by county sheriff's departments, the Town has the effect of providing intensive law enforcement services to the residents of the Town.

The Department of Criminal Justice Services, of the State of Virginia, does not use a formula to determine the number of officers per 1,000 residents. Instead the number of officers is determined by the need of the community. Currently, the

Chincoteague Police Department employs 9 full-time officers and hopes to add one or two part-time officers. All of the officers have patrol responsibility. The current staffing of the Police Department provides about one officer per 400 residents during the non-peak season. During the peak tourist season this may increase to one officer per each 2,000 residents. The average response time is approximately two minutes. In the future it is hoped that the number of full-time officers can be increased to at least twelve.

It should, also, be noted that the Town is engaged in crime prevention programs, but no officer is assigned to such activity on a full time basis. The Accomack County Sheriff's Office currently has a deputy stationed at the Chincoteague High School for the safety of the children.

The Chincoteague Police Department has four full-time telecommunications positions, augmented by four or five part-time positions. The telecommunications department provides service to the citizens of the island on a 24 hour a day basis. The Communication Center operates the Chincoteague 911 Center and provides services to the citizens, police, fire and rescue. The Communication Center in an agreement made between the Town and the Federal Government, also, provides dispatch services for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the National Park Service on Assateague Island. At the present time the number of dispatchers per shift is two only in the peak season or special occasions, it is hoped that two dispatchers per shift will be employed year round. This would provide better 911 services to the citizens of the Town.

The more stable the population of a community is, the more local residents can establish acceptable modes of behavior that minimize the occurrence of crime found in larger, more impersonal areas. To keep the Town stable in the future, purposeful, written law enforcement policies which the community is aware of will be needed to enhance tourism on the Island, while maintaining control of residential and business areas for the safety and protection of year round residents.

The Town's criminal justice efforts are assisted by Accomack County's provision of jail facilities, as well as by the activities of the County's Sheriff Department.

During the first six months of 2000 the Town's law enforcement officers responded to approximately 1180 calls for assistance and issued 161 traffic summons. In 1987 the total calls for assistance was 1516 (for the incorporated and unincorporated portion of the island) for the year, this shows that the Police Department in the first six months of 2000 handled 78% of the total calls for 1987. This amount can only be expected to increase with the future influx of tourist and residents expected due to the proposed Assateague Visitor's Center and the possible Space Port to be located at Wallops.

In 1989 the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (VDCJS) conducted a survey and assessment of the Chincoteague Police Department. The resulting report covered a myriad of subjects and suggestions.

As noted in the report, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA), which evolved from joint efforts of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Law Enforcement Executives, and the National Sheriff's Association, created the Standards for Law Enforcement Agencies. This report contains over 1000 performance and service points out that "... there are no Commonwealth of Virginia requirements that any police agency seek accreditation, however, most departments going through the process will reap the rewards of peer recognition, liability insurance rates reductions, and political status within the community."

Accordingly, this Commission feels that the Town and the Police Department should pursue the goal of accreditation for the department, when the Town and the Police Department deems feasible.

I. RECREATION FACILITIES:

Town residents are generously endowed with outdoor recreation opportunities on the nearby marshes, beaches, bays, and the ocean. The Town maintains ramps for launching boats at the Town Dock, Fir Landing, Eastside, Curtis Merritt Harbor of Refuge, and Chincoteague Veterans Memorial Park.

The Chincoteague Veterans Memorial Park offers a variety of recreational activities. The Park has two tennis courts, basketball court, baseball field, grass volleyball court, playground equipment and a picnic pavilion. In addition, the Town operates a public pier with two gazebos along the shoreline at the Chincoteague Veterans Memorial Park. Two additional gazebos on the upland area have been installed.

The Commission feels that additional shoreline recreational facilities are needed on both sides of the Island.

The Chincoteague Recreation/Convention Center Authority completed the construction of the new recreation and convention center in 1996.

It is felt that this center brings benefits to both residents and visitors alike to the Island. Since the beginning of its opening, the local schools have used this structure for school graduations and special events. Several events for State agencies have been conducted at different times of the year. It is anticipated that the growth of the future use will exceed present expectations with the proposed expansion of the Wallops Flight Facility.

Although the center meets the needs of the local civic and volunteer organizations, it is felt by a majority of the community that the use of the center for recreational activities for the youth is not meeting the expectations as identified prior to the beginning phases of this project. The low ceilings in this building prevents the use

of basketball or volleyball and the like uses. This design was due to cost constraints.

While sports related youth activities are not available at the Community Center, it is important to note that 44 free use events during 2000 were intended for the promotion and activity of children and young persons. Five events of a full or community rental rate category were also directly intended for young persons. Thus, the Community Center still delivers youth activities in the building.

The Community Center also contributes to the economics of the Island by attracting visitors to events held at the facility. Therefore, the Community Center has realized some of the community's goals for this facility.

It should be noted that the Authority has begun steps to raise money to construct a community pool for residents and visitors alike.

It is important to note that all of the monies raised to build the Community Center have come from the county and Town's transient occupancy taxes. The Town continues to contribute 25% of the transient occupancy tax toward the operation and maintenance of the Community Center. In addition, 5% of the meals tax money earmarked for tourism has been allocated to the Community Center for the past few years. These funds provided approximately \$95,000 in fiscal year 2001 and approximately 66% of the Community Center's budget.

The Town should pursue the possibility of turning other public lands into recreational areas such as the Lekites property located on Lekites Drive for a walking trail or the Curtis Merritt Harbor of Refuge property on the south end of the Island for a fishing recreation pier. It is noted that the local little league origination has leased the school property behind the Community Center and has constructed two little league fields, which opened in the Spring of 2001.

J. SEWAGE DISPOSAL:

Presently there is no central sewage collection and treatment system serving the Island. Wastewater on Chincoteague is disposed of primarily by discharge directly into seepage pits, cesspools, or by the use of holding tanks or septic tanks and drain fields. The maintenance of these individually owned sewage systems on the Island are provided by the periodic pumping of these facilities by private firms.

Recently a few packaged sewage systems have been installed by residents of the Island and are in use. This kind of "alternative" sewage system is something that the Commission believes the Town will see more and more.

Sewage disposal is probably the most controversial subject on the Island. At the one extreme are those who feel that there are no sewage problems on the Island. On the other extreme are those who believe that every cesspool and septic system on the

Island has either failed or is about to. In addition different state and federal agencies have confused the issue by referencing the "sewage problems" on Chincoteague. In numerous reports and documents, without apparent substantial supporting evidence. For example the state Department of Health, Division of Shellfish Sanitation (DSS) has "restricted" approximately 30% of the waters surrounding Chincoteague (mostly on the west side of the Island) because the . . . "potential for contaminating" (emphasis added) shellfish growing areas is present. By reading the documentation justifying the closures one discovers that a high percentage of the potential pollution is from "...contributing boat " polluters. Whether the potential pollution is fossil (fuel, as many suspect) or fecal is not spelled out.

The closure term itself (restricted) causes concern until one discovers that with proper permits and procedures, shellfish in most of these areas can be removed and sold. In defense of DSS, they are currently trying to get more definitive language approved by the state. It should also be noted that those shellfish beds currently being utilized in surrounding waters have, to the best of our knowledge, never been closed by any state or federal agency and in fact DSS has categorically stated that "...the water quality is excellent" in those areas.

We would also like to make the following observation. To date it seems that the answer to real or imagined sewage disposal problems on the Island always gets back to a central sewage system. This particular solution, as has been pointed out on numerous occasions, is too costly for this Island alone to support. We believe that the answer to this dilemma rests in "alternative" systems such as sand filtration, peat moss systems and commercial package systems. However, the expense of these new systems may be cost prohibited.

K. SIGNS:

In 1994, the Town revised and developed new sign ordinances to control the amount of signs permitted. It is felt that the new regulations meet the need of the local businesses and maintain a balance between sign advocates and those that oppose signs. The Town must maintain constant re-appraisal of this issue and be ready to further modify these ordinances if signage begins to detract from the environmental, historic, economic or scenic qualities of the Island.

L. SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL:

Currently, the Town contracts with a private contractor to haul solid waste to the County Landfill outside of Atlantic, Virginia.

The Town provides solid waste collection services on a weekly basis to its residents and commercial establishments ~~through contract with a private collector~~. Due to the escalating cost of trash removal and associated price increases with private contractors, the Town is pursuing the collection of solid waste by the Town's Public

Works Department. The cost of this service is borne by the Town's general fund and is not supported by user charges.

Accomack County, like most of the State's rural counties, does not provide any door-to-door solid waste collection services to individual residences or business establishments. The County does offer a bulk container service for solid waste disposal, with "green boxes" being situated throughout the County. Currently, the Town and the County jointly maintains a solid waste and recyclables collection center on the Island, with this facility serving all residents.

Effective July 1, 1989, Virginia General Assembly enacted 10.1-411 of the Waste Management Act of the Code of Virginia. The Act mandated the development and implementation of local solid waste management plans. Subsequently the Virginia Department of Waste Management adopted regulations governing the requirements for local solid waste management plans. These regulations call for each city, county and town in the Commonwealth to develop a solid waste management plan and submit them for approval to the state. These regulations also call for the following minimum goals:

1. By December 31, 1991, a recycling rate of 10% of the total of household wastes and principal recyclable materials that are wastes from non-household sources generated annually.

2. By December 31, 1993 a recycling rate of 15%.

3. By December 31, 1995 a recycling rate of 25%.

The Town elected to join with other incorporated towns and Accomack County to formulate a regional recycling plan. It should be kept in mind that the recycling goals set forth by the State would require an aggressive approach by each jurisdiction.

The above goals were jointly met.

M. TRANSPORTATION:

The current road system dates from a time when lesser volumes of traffic were experienced on the Island. Although many improvements have been and continue to be made to the Island's roads, consideration should be given to future traffic needs and how the existing traffic patterns can be reconfigured to accommodate higher volumes of traffic.

Most non-local traffic entering Chincoteague travels north on Main Street, then down Maddox Boulevard towards Assateague. Another major portion travels down South Main Street to campgrounds. In the future, tourist traffic should be encouraged on these main travel routes. One-way streets have been discussed as a means of diverting heavier traffic flows onto parallel routes. Further encroachment of non-local traffic in the

quieter residential areas should be discouraged. Luckily many of the streets in the residential areas of Town are dead ends or are narrow and do not encourage through traffic use.

Currently, parking in the downtown area is limited. The area between Mumford and Church Streets allows some storefront parking on the east side of Main Street. Additionally, the Town owns and maintains a parking lot off of Post Office Street, which is located behind current businesses located between Mumford and Church Streets. The Town also provides off street parking in the boat ramp area located across from the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company's main station. It is recommended that the Town look into future parking areas for easy access.

On Main Street and on Maddox Boulevard, well-designed signs directing traffic to easily accessible parking areas can help to capture larger shares of the potential sales market. However, overkill should be prevented. Sign competition, be it for parking or for business advertisement, can make an eyesore of any business area.

Bicycling has become a major recreational activity on the Island and is often used as an alternate mode of transportation. In recognition of this growth, a bicycling plan was developed and is incorporated in this plan as Exhibit 6.

2. Street lights: Another municipal service provided by the Town is the installation, operation, and maintenance of streetlights. Currently there are approximately 635 publicly funded streetlights within the Town's corporate limits. The Town has a policy of accepting requests for additional streetlights from its citizens, and where such are deemed appropriate and necessary for public safety and welfare, new lights are installed and operated at public expense.

3. Sidewalks: Approximately 80% of the public roads serving residential and commercial areas in the original Town have sidewalks. The Town has a policy of installing sidewalks upon citizen request and upon their agreement to bear half of the construction cost. The Town annually allocates public funds for the maintenance and extension of these facilities to meet such citizen requests or municipal needs. The Town budgets monies

Sidewalks are virtually nonexistent in the annexed area. The application of the sidewalk policy should benefit this area.

Compared with other towns on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, lot sizes in Chincoteague are small and population density is high. These facts make sidewalks important, particularly in the centers of activity in Town. Three basic questions are useful in evaluating the need for sidewalks in Chincoteague.

- a. Is the sidewalk necessary for the safety of the public?

- b. Is the sidewalk necessary for the walk to school - either elementary or high school?
- c. Is the sidewalk necessary for the public to have access to business areas?

As population density and traffic continue to increase on Chincoteague, good sidewalks throughout the Town will become a necessity in order to promote safety, access and circulation in the residential and commercial neighborhoods.

It is noted that an increasing incidence of bike riders and skateboarders appear to feel that the sidewalks are meant for them and, "let the pedestrian beware!" The Town needs to expand and then strictly apply its use restrictions on sidewalks.

N. WATER:

The original water works system for the Town was constructed in 1927. In 1973 the Town added approximately 70,000 feet of additional distribution line to the system. Of the approximately 70 miles of Town-owned and maintained water mains on the Island, 70% are located in the annexed area. In the mid-1980's the Town upgraded the transmission line bringing water from the mainland from an 8" pipe to a 16" pipe. The 8" line initially enabled the Town to supply water to all residents without the need for rationing during the summer tourist season. Subsequent to the installation of the 16" supply line, the older 8" supply line has had work done on it and is available for use during peak demand periods or when the 16" main is shut down for maintenance or repair.

The source of the Town's water is a series of wells on the mainland approximately 5 miles from Town. There are currently 3 deep wells and 5 shallow wells for public water supply. The Town is currently making application to install one additional deep well. Additionally, the Town has considered installing an additional 1,000,000-gallon tank or two high-rise tanks to meet demand.

The Town is currently in negotiations with NASA to form a Public Service Authority (PSA) for the sharing of water resources.

The total capacity of the working wells is approximately 1.5 million gallons per day (mgd). As of mid September 1991, the one-day maximum draw was 1.45 MGD, which occurred when the Town experienced a leak in the large transmission line. The one-day maximum draw under ordinary circumstances was 1.1 MGD, which occurred during the summer of 1988.

Pumped water is chlorinated at the well site and then pumped the 5 miles to the Island via either the recently installed 16" transmission line or through the older 8"

transmission line. The water reaches the Town's water works where it is filtered for iron. It then enters a one million gallon ground storage tank. The iron content of the unfiltered water is still below the maximums set by the state.

From the ground storage tank, water is pumped to a 200,000 gallon elevated storage tank for distribution to the Town's 3,200 water customers. During the peak of the Island's tourist season the Town's storage capacity is sufficient to meet one day's demand.

This is, perhaps, the one weak point in the system, the storage capacity. The Commission suggests that the Town review options regarding the construction of additional storage capacity for the water system.

Chincoteague is permitted by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to withdraw up to 1.34 MGD of groundwater from its existing wells. This cap was placed due to concerns that any increase in this volume could result in the depletion of the underground water table and the intrusion of saltwater into the aquifer. Such withdrawal operations are monitored on a monthly basis by VDH and DEQ to ensure that groundwater sources are not being depleted. The Town can exceed its permitted withdrawal volume on an infrequent basis to meet peak water demands. The town estimates that during the tourist season the average daily population in its water service area is approximately 15,000 persons. In addition VDH and DEQ officials have stated that there have been no incidents of saltwater intrusion into the mainland aquifer serving Chincoteague as a result of the operation of the Town wells.

As an aside, a recent groundwater study has estimated that while licenses have been issued for a total withdrawal amount of 14.9 MGD the recharge rate or water replacement of the aquifer averages only 11 MGD. Permitted withdrawals are more than three times the current withdrawal rates.

In terms of the interests of the residents of the annexed area, it should be noted that their incorporation into the Town had the effect of reducing their cost for water service. Further, during annexation proceedings the Town indicated its desire to improve and extend its water distribution system in the area proposed for annexation by installing an additional 8,300 feet of water main and 16 fire hydrants.

It should be pointed out that the water pressure in the system is sufficient to meet nationally recognized standards for municipal water service.

IV. INVENTORY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

A. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF CHINCOTEAGUE:

The Town of Chincoteague, Inc., is located in Accomack County on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Accomack County is one of the oldest counties in the country having been split out of the original Northampton County in 1663. (One of the earliest court records for Accomack county records a "riot" at Jungoteague Island in 1671. This "riot" turned out to be a land dispute.) The Town of Chincoteague, which is located on Chincoteague Island, was incorporated by the Virginia General Assembly in 1906 and currently is one of the principal municipalities on the Shore.

For a number of years the Town consisted of approximately 25% of the landmass of the Island of Chincoteague, with the remainder of the landmass belonging to Accomack County. Although much of its early history was associated with the seafood Industry and that industry remains vital and important today, the Town has now become a recreation and tourist center. The Town's development as a tourist center is due to its natural beauty, access to the surrounding waters for fishing and its proximity to the 13,000-acre Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and Assateague National Seashore located on Assateague Island.

Before 1949 most of the houses and businesses on the Island were within the old Town limits, with some additional development around Deep Hole Road and Chicken City Road. Referring to the Soils Map In Exhibit 3, it is clear that Islanders built on the best land first, avoiding poorly drained, low-lying land.

After 1949, most of the new construction on the Island occurred outside the old Town limits. This new development covered most of the remaining land determined to be "best suited" for development on the Soils Map. In addition, land not well suited for development because of poor drainage or a high seasonal high water table, has also been developed. Indeed, some marshlands, notably Oyster Bay, have also been filled and made into home-sites.

The causeway between Chincoteague and Assateague and the establishment of Assateague National Seashore in the 1960's caused a dramatic shift in the character of new development on Chincoteague. Prior to the causeway and national seashore, the mainstays of Chincoteague's economy were seafood and the poultry industry. Watermen harvested world famous oysters and clams from the surrounding bays. Commercial fisherman harvested the banks off Assateague Island. Seafood processing houses and mooring areas for workboats on the waterfront reflected the vitality of these seafood industries. You could also find poultry houses spread throughout the Island. The one and two story wood frame houses built on Chincoteague Island in this era reflect the need to provide comfortable, year round shelter for growing families.

The national seashore and adjacent wildlife refuge added a new dynamic growth factor to land development on Chincoteague. From a few rooming houses and small hotels in the 1950's, tourist accommodations have expanded tremendously. At present enough motel and hotel rooms, cabins, and campsites exist to accommodate more than

11,000 summer visitors. And the character of new development is very different from earlier years. Beside older large wooden frame homes are small gift shops and other commercial establishments. Beside closed oyster shucking houses and motels are new homes, aluminum travel trailers, mobile homes and summer homes on pilings.

In 2000, the last year such data was kept, Chincoteague's year-round population of 4324 swelled to nearly 15,000 during the summer months. While no statistical data exists to support it, a belief persists that more and more visitors come to the Island each year for Pony Penning. Visitors to Assateague Island reached an all time high of 1,568,604 in 1987.

1. Annexation:

In the early 1980's the Town began formal discussions on the advisability of annexing the unincorporated part of the Island. On July 1, 1989, the Town of Chincoteague officially annexed the rest of Chincoteague Island and surrounding environs, but excluded the Rt. 175 Causeway.

As a result of annexation negotiations between the Town of Chincoteague and Accomack County an agreement was developed which contained provisions which (a) granted the Town an annexation of 42.0 square miles of County territory, (b) permitted the County to levy its transient occupancy tax (2%) within the enlarged Town of Chincoteague, (c) required that the Town waive any claim it had made for monies paid to the County by the federal government for the lands then encompassed on Assateague Island (the original annexation proposal stated that the Virginia portion of Assateague Island was to be Included by the Town in the annexed area.

The claim waived by the Town to reclaim monies paid to the County by the Federal Government for lands on Assateague should be reevaluated.

While annexation provided the Town with additional revenues, it also presented the municipality with expanded public service responsibilities. The Town is required to provide general governmental services to the residents of the areas annexed at the same level as was provided to the original Town's residents.

The annexation enabled the energies of the enlarged municipality to address more effectively the significant environmental and public service concerns confronting the Island. The future well being of all residents will be determined by a proper resolution of the same public service issues, and environmental concerns and the influence of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife policies. Recognizing the current and growing Interdependence of the old Town and the incorporated area, the demographic and governmental integration of the Island is clearly in the interest of all citizens.

2. Population:

Demographic data indicate that the original Town of Chincoteague area experienced a population loss during the 1970's from 1867 to 1607 persons, or by 13.9%. A population's estimate done in 1988 placed the original Town's population at 1,220, a further decline of 24.1 % since the preceding decennial census. Based on its land area of 0.79 square miles and the 1988 population estimate the Town had a population density of 1,544 persons per square mile. The Island's population, on the other hand, increased from 3258 to 3555 during the '70's and from 3555 to 3572 during the '80's.

During the 1970's, Accomack County had a population Increase of from 29,004 to 31,268, or 7.8%. The population for 2000 placed the County's population at 38,305. Based on those figures the County had an overall population density of 69.7 persons per square mile.

With respect to the nature of its population, the evidence indicates that the residents of the Town were significantly older and less affluent than those of the state generally. Data reveal that as of 1990 the median age of town residents was 44.3 years, a statistic markedly greater than that for the State overall (30.6 years). Further, 'the percentage of the Town's 1990 populations age 65 and older was 30.6 while the comparable figure for the State generally was only 16%. In terms of earnings, data reveal that as of 1990, the median family income in the Town of Chincoteague was 21,996, or only 65.9% of the comparable statistic for the commonwealth as a whole (\$33,328).

In contrast, the County's population is younger (37.6 years) has a smaller percentage aged 65 or over (28.4%) and has a lower median income (\$20,431) as compared to the state overall.

While these data reflect a population older and less affluent than that of the Commonwealth generally, they also disclose that County variations from the statewide measures are not as pronounced as those for the Town.

3. Housing:

The number of housing units on the Island increased over 53% (from 1597 to 2446) between 1970 and 1980, and by another 29% (from 2446 to 3572) between 1980 and 1990. Most of this growth occurred outside the old Town limits. The population on the Island outside the old Town showed a similar Increase. The trend in construction of new housing on the Island did show a decrease in 1998. (In 1998 the following new residential building permits were Issued; single family dwellings = 18, mobile homes = 4 20, townhouses = 16, manufactured homes = 7, total new residential dwellings = 61. If the building trend of the '80's were to continue, housing starts would have to average almost 72 new dwellings a year.) While that trend seems to have leveled off during the early part of 1991 it is doubtful If the Island will again experience the housing boom it enjoyed during the '70's and '80's, even If for no other reason than the limited availability

of vacant, usable land. If past use trends continue, the majority of new homes will be for summer use only and many will be mobile homes.

New business activity on the Island has also leveled off. Additional homes may be converted to small restaurants and gift shops and the Town may experience the building of additional motels and restaurants but all development can be expected to proceed at a much slower rate. Similarly, large areas of the Island have been developed into trailer parks and campgrounds, and some continued growth could be expected.

Table 3 shows the growth in population on Chincoteague from 1950 to 1990, and the growth in the housing stock for 1970 through 1990.

TABLE 3: POPULATION AND HOUSING

Year	Town		Island Outside of Town		Total	
	Persons	Houses	Persons	Houses	Persons	Houses
1950	2724		1342		4066	
1960	2131		1339		3470	
1970	1867	960	1391	637	3258	1597
1980	1607	1083	1948	1363	3555	2446

Annexation took affect July 1, 1989.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Persons</u>	<u>Occupied Houses</u>	<u>Vacant Houses</u>	<u>Total Houses</u>
1990	3572	1691	1472	3163
2000	4324	2068	1902	3970

B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

1. History:

Colonists used Chincoteague as early as 1670 for a livestock range. Eventually they built log houses on the island and settled year-round. By 1800 over 50 families lived on "Gingoteag". By the time the Civil War broke out the Island was enjoying a thriving oyster trade, primarily with northern cities. The entire South had nasty things to say about the Island when it voted against secession, 138-2, at the outbreak of the great conflict. To protect the oyster business and the lives of the Islanders, the gunboat "Union" patrolled local waters during the war. Commerce and communication with the mainland surged after the railroad reached Franklin City, five miles across Chincoteague Bay, in 1876. This railroad made the economy of the area boom by providing rapid, dependable transport for local seafood products to Philadelphia and

New York. In the 1880's an estimated 1/3 million bushels of oysters were harvested annually in Chincoteague Bay. During 1888 Chincoteague shipped approximately 33,000 barrels to northern cities at the rate of \$0.70 per barrel.

As early as the 1870's recorded tradition had it that a vessel loaded with horses in route to an English colony ran aground near Assateague and the horses swam ashore. The crew was rescued by friendly Indians and was subsequently escorted to mainland settlements. Other tales have it that the vessel was Spanish and still other tales tell that the vessel was actually a pirate ship which anchored offshore and then swam the horses ashore so that they could graze. The pirate vessel was unexpectedly chased off and sunk by the English while the horses were left to their own devices.

Wherever they came from they were to be found in Somerset and Accomack Counties in large numbers as early as 1671. In fact they were so numerous and caused such wide spread damage to local crops that on the mainland in Virginia they were hunted by groups of young men using dogs.

The first roundup and pony penning probably took place in the late 17th century when, by order of the King, all stock was to be confined and counted for taxation purposes. Today the pony penning and auction is the highlight of the year drawing crowds estimated to number between 35,000 and 50,000. Since 1924 the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Department has held their annual pony swim and auction on the last Wednesday & Thursday in July.

The only way on or off the Island continued to be by boat until the early 1920's. Efforts to construct a causeway were led by Captain John B. Whealton, a man who had sailed around the world and had seen many unique and interesting sights. One of the sights that interested him the most was the series of causeways linking the Florida Keys together. He soon developed a vision of the same type of causeway linking Chincoteague with the mainland.

On November 15, 1922 that vision was realized when, with the Governor and 4,000 other participants, he opened the new causeway. The rain was so bad, though, that 96 cars were unable to leave the Island and by the end of the day the causeway was ruined. Within a month, Capt. Jack and his fellow "Teaguer's" had rebuilt the causeway. (This causeway forged a new link to the mainland that totally by-passed Franklin City and that municipality became a ghost town virtually overnight.)

The tourist business improved with the opening of the causeway, making Chincoteague more accessible to city dwellers attracted to the Island for hunting, fishing, and summer vacations. In 1943 the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge was created on Assateague Island. Almost 10,000 acres were included in this new Refuge. (To date there have been over 280 different bird species spotted within the refuge, including the re-establishment of the Bald Eagle although some of these have been seen only once or twice.) Recently the southern portion of the beach (approximately 7

miles) has been closed to the public for several months annually to protect an endangered bird. The big change in the Island's economy, however, came in 1962 when a bridge was completed linking Assateague to Chincoteague. This opened the ocean beaches to easy access. The establishment of the Assateague Island National Seashore in 1965 further encouraged the use of the area.

During the mid 1980's the Town of Chincoteague successfully applied for a state grant and completed construction of the Curtis Merritt Harbor of Refuge at the south end of the Island. Today the harbor offers 30', 40' and 50' length slips to a total of 72 vessels. The harbor is one of the two major ocean fishing ports on the Delmarva Peninsula, Ocean City being the other. The Town competes with other major ports as far away as Cape May (85 miles north) and Hampton (95 miles south).

Continual dredging of the Chincoteague Channel by the Army Corps of Engineers is required for easy shipping access to both the harbor and the numerous docks surrounding the Island. Dredging occurs on an ongoing basis and more frequently as needed in order to keep the Island's waterways navigable.

While seafood has played a significant historical role in the economic development of Chincoteague, the decade of the 80's saw a downward spiral of the overall impact of this industry. However, the practice of aquaculture increased during the 1990's and is expected to continue and be increasingly important to our economy. There are still several businesses, which generate large gross sales of seafood and a significant percentage of individuals who make all or part of their income on the water; however, today tourism is the largest single industry on the island. The motels, campgrounds, gift shops and restaurants on Chincoteague provide several hundred Jobs for local residents, most of them seasonal in nature.

The visitor demand for Assateague Island will undoubtedly remain strong in future years which in turn will continue to fuel the tourist industry on the Island. Conversion of more land and structures from homes to facilities serving tourists will reflect this demand. There currently is a proposed visitor and education facility proposed for the Chincoteague Wildlife Refuge, which should increase visitation to both Islands year round.

C. CURRENT LAND USE:

With respect to the original Town's physical development, 1988 land use data indicated that 51.7% of Chincoteague's total area was devoted to residential development, 12.7% to commercial enterprise, 8.2% to industrial activity, 8.2% to public and semipublic uses, and 19.2% (97 acres) remained vacant. A large portion of the vacant land was situated on tracts, which had questionable development potential, with the result, that the Town had an extremely limited amount of vacant land suitable for future development.

Land use data for the annexed area of the Island reveals that exclusive of tidal waters (33.2 square miles), 14.0% of the area is devoted to residential development, 4.4% to commercial enterprise, 1.0% to industrial activity, 34.6% to public and semi-public uses, with 46.9% remaining vacant.

Exhibit 4 shows current land use on the entire Island. As the map shows, what little industrial activity there remains in Town is on the waterfront side of North and South Main Street within 5 or 6 blocks of the causeway leading to the mainland.

A large number of commercial businesses, many of them tourist related, are also located along the waterfront side of Main Street. The commercial businesses on the fast landside of Main Street within 3-4 blocks of the causeway combine with the stores, shops, and seafood businesses on the waterfront to create Chincoteague's unique downtown area. This downtown area provides goods and services to local residents and tourists alike, and is also an important center for social and civic life in Town.

A second commercial area is located on Maddox Boulevard, on the road to Assateague. Unlike the older Main Street shopping area, this shopping district is oriented more towards the automobile than the pedestrian, and more toward the tourist than the year-round resident. Nearby motels and campgrounds strengthen the role of this area as an auto-oriented, seasonal tourist center.

Much of the remaining land on the Island is either in residential use or is vacant. Businesses and tourist facilities are scattered among some areas designated "Residential" and many residents pursue secondary and even primary vocations out of their homes (home occupations). In addition many residential structures are located in areas zoned "Commercial".

Several distinct residential neighborhoods have evolved in Town. For example, three of the Town's seven churches are located among the homes around Church Street.

Prior planning projections now appear to have been overly optimistic. At one time as many as 375 new residents housed in 250 new dwellings were projected through the end of the 1900's. With the increasing importance of tourism any population increase will more likely be temporary, seasonal residents attracted to the Island's summer Job market, weather or cultural atmosphere. Further, new dwellings may take the form of manufactured homes, may be conversions of existing homes to apartments, or may be new apartment or townhouse type structures of higher density than existing homes on the Island. As Table 3 has shown, the 1980-1990 decade saw a dramatic increase of new homes in Town.

Indications from recent business license data reveal that new business starts continue to grow each year but the rate of success for such businesses is considered low. While business licenses have grown from 587 in 1990, to 1029 as of December of

2000, much of this growth is probably due to better licensing enforcement and compliance.

The number of stores and shops on the Island catering to tourists appears to have generally grown over the past 10 years.

Given continued economic growth on the Island, hopefully both the old downtown commercial area and the newer Maddox Boulevard area can continue to grow. In future years, even though at a much slower rate than earlier projected with proper planning, the Town of Chincoteague has a unique opportunity to both encourage and direct future growth to the long term good and betterment of all local residents.

D. VACANT LAND:

Exhibit 4 shows land use in Town. A large expanse of fast land exists in the northern part of Town, adjacent to the School Board property. A few lots are scattered throughout the existing residential neighborhoods in Town. Large blocks of land exist in the southern part of Town, on lots east of Main Street. Much of the waterfront is occupied; however, a large open area exists along the southern portion of Main Street.

At present some of the vacant land in Town serves to drain storm water. Current "wetlands" regulations, now considered to have questionable enforcement authority, still discourage development of the waterfront along southern Main Street. Where large tracts of vacant land remain, the Town may consider Innovative-zoning techniques that encourage development designed in response to storm water drainage, "wetlands", or other local environmental factors. Currently there are 1,734 vacant lots within the Town as of December of 1999. Currently the Town, the School Board and several local residents own large tracts of land. It is critical that future development criteria, particularly in the larger tracts or where higher than normal density is proposed, adequately address the issue of wastewater and drainage.

E. HOUSING:

The Town enforces, through a Building Administrator, Volume One of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC) as the standard for new construction in Town. The code is mandated by State law but gives the builder the option of choosing between the BOCA and the CABO codes for the building of one and two family dwellings. It is anticipated that the State will cease the adoption of the BOCA and CABO Codes and adopt the International Building Code by the year 2002. Volume Two of the VUSBC, which is optional, allows a Jurisdiction to enforce certain levels of

maintenance and repair on existing structures. The Town has chosen not to adopt this volume and instead has an unsafe building ordinance.

F. PLANNING, ZONING AND SUBDIVISION REGULATION:

The Town established its first Planning Commission in 1969 and currently guides its planning efforts under a comprehensive plan adopted in 1992. The Town also utilizes the official subdivision and zoning ordinances, adopted on January 4, 1994 as implements to manage its development. It is felt by the Commission that the Town's current zoning and subdivision ordinance is well suited to the intensity of the development which currently exist. There are still several locations on the Island where residential homes are located in and abutting to commercial districts. It is noted that persons purchasing such residential dwellings in or adjoining a commercial district may want to consider the associated noise that comes from the commercial type businesses prior to purchasing such properties.

The Town has amended its zoning and subdivision regulations to address the entire Island in the application of its policies which has resulted ~~can result~~ in a more unified and comprehensive approach to controlling future growth and to preserving the delicate and distinctive features of the Island, both environmental and cultural.

V. GOALS

Introduction

This section of the Town Plan sets forth Goals, Objectives and Strategies to guide future planning and development of Chincoteague. The Goals provide a way of coordinating and directing public energies, investments and programs to bring the greatest and best possible return for residents and visitors.

Goals are general statements of a future condition, which is considered desirable for the community. They are long range, all encompassing ideals toward which public resources should be directed. Since they reflect basic, long-range needs, goals change very little from year to year and will probably include projects or programs already implemented and underway.

Objectives are more limited and direct in scope than Goals. They are a statement of a measurable activity to be accomplished in pursuit of a goal and refer to some specific aspiration, which is reasonably attainable. In this context they define definite courses of action, which may result in public policy commitments. Specific conditions, whether existing, anticipated or desired, determine Objectives

Strategies are specific proposals to do something that relates directly to accomplishing the objective they identify the how, where, and amount to be done. They are not all encompassing nor are they the only solutions to the problem. After appropriate study and discussion, strategies may or may not be practical and they may or may not be implemented. In this plan strategies are presented as "brainstorming" Ideas that have occurred to the Commission. Some strategies may, and probably have, In fact, already been implemented.

The Goals have been separated into eight separate areas of concern: Community Facilities, Main Street Revitalization, Economic Development, Education, Housing, Land Use, Public Safety and Transportation.

The Chincoteague Planning Commission has worked hard to develop these Goals. Although their work is based on the best Information presently available, time, changing conditions, and new problems will make it necessary to update these Goals and Objectives on a continuing basis. Members of the community and other interested parties are also encouraged to continue to share their views and visions of the future of Chincoteague with the Planning Commission.

With these thoughts in mind, we, the members of the Chincoteague Planning Commission, invite you, the reader, to review and comment on the 2001 Goals and Objectives for the future development of Chincoteague.

A. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

GOAL:

Provide for the development, maintenance and replacement of community facilities, equipment and services, which serve the public.

1. Capital Improvement Program

Objective:

In view of the Town's recognized need to install enlarged water mains, the need to address the wastewater management problems on the Island, the near-term assumption of the responsibility for the maintenance of public thoroughfares, and other needed acquisitions or improvements of facilities, equipment, or services, this Commission recommends that the Town adopt a Capital Improvement Program, to assist it in the proper Implementation and management of its planning and budgeting.

2. Cemeteries:

Objective:

Promote the development, protection and upkeep of cemeteries.

Strategy:

1. Identify all cemeteries.
2. While community groups have adopted cemeteries for some time, additional encouragement is needed to make sure they are maintained on a regular basis so that the larger cemeteries remain clean.
3. Encourage the delineation of all cemeteries so they will be identified and more easily maintained.

3. Community Center

Objective:

Encourage the community center to be self-supporting.

Strategy:

1. Support the Chincoteague Center Authority whose responsibilities include the effective, self-sustaining operation of the Community Center. The financial goal of this committee should be to "break-even".
2. Encourage the development of additional programs and facilities for the Islands youth. (e.g.; pool, additions to the existing facility which are youth related, pool tables)

4. Harbor:

Objective:

Insure the public's safety at the harbor.

Strategy:

1. Harbor Master should continue to maintain safe conditions at the harbor at all times.

Objective:

Provide for the financial health of the harbor.

Strategy:

1. Continue with public meetings so that the public may voice its opinion of current and future harbor policies.
2. Review and update all financial policies of the Curtis Merritt Harbor of Refuge, especially current slip rental rates.

Objective:

Insure that slips are rented to those Individuals who were listed as priority users under the original development plans.

Strategy:

1. Continue to maintain a written slip policy which:
 - A. Provides, by fees, for both the maintenance and long-term replacement of the facility. A periodic fee adjustment should be discussed and implemented
 - B. Prioritized slip assignments by group.

5. Library:

Objective:

Support the community library as an independent facility or as an annex of the County library system.

Strategy:

1. Help to enlarge the library.
2. Help publicize/promote the library.
3. Donate money or staff time each year to the library (e.g., staff could help with the book drive on Town time.)

6. Parks:

Objective:

Support the preparation and implementation of a long-range plan for the development of additional recreational facilities at Memorial Park.

Strategy:

1. Seek out any available state and federal monies to accomplish this goal.
2. Update/replace worn playground equipment.

Objective:

Identify other Town and County owned lands, which could be developed into parks and/or recreational facilities.

Strategy:

1. Identify desirable recreational activities.
2. Pair-up activities with any potential sites.
3. Pursue the development of a particular site in conjunction with a desired activity.

Objective:

Determine the need for creating a Parks and Recreation Committee.

7. Public Pier

Objective:

Plan and construct public piers on each side of Island, if appropriate.

8. Sewage System:

Objective:

Monitor State Health Department regulations for sewerage disposal on the island and lobby the State to maintain a reasonable sewerage regulation.

9. Water System:

Objective:

Provide safe, clean drinking water for the island.

Strategy:

1. Develop a replacement program to upgrade the older distribution pipes of the water system.
2. Continue a preventive maintenance program for the waterworks facility.
3. Review the possibility of adding storage capacity at the Town's waterworks.
4. Install new wells to serve the Island.
5. Assess the distribution pipes to the Island and develop a plan for replacement.

10. Assateague Island:

(It is recognized that Assateague Island is outside of the Jurisdiction of the Town of Chincoteague: however, because of its tremendous impact on Chincoteague, it is included as an area deserving of the Town's attention and is therefore included as a goal of this Comprehensive Plan.)

GOAL:

Insure the continued, diversified public access to Assateague Island and the many recreational options thereon.

Objective:

Vigorously promote the continuation of footpaths, bike trails and private auto access onto and around Assateague Island.

Objective:

Participate in any opportunities to have input into the policies and procedures of the Fish and Wildlife and National Park operations on Assateague.

Objective:

Promote the continuation of a minimum of 961 available parking spaces.

Objective:

Strive to limit closures on and around Assateague Island.

Objective:

Strive to ban total closures on and around Assateague Island.

Objective:

Establish a direct liaison between the Town and the Fish & Wildlife and Park Service on the federal level.

B. MAIN STREET REVITALIZATION

GOAL:

To develop an overall strategy to be implemented in phases. That will promote Main Street Revitalization to include the new bridge location at the intersection of Maddox Blvd. and draw visitors to historic downtown. To promote new business and services for a thriving downtown.

Objective: (Phase 1)

Support the Town acquisition of the vacant lot.

Strategy:

1. Hire planners to determine the best possible use of the lot.
2. Gather public input.
3. Seek out state funding from VDOT and CDBG and other programs.
4. If necessary, lease portions of the property.

Objective: (Phase 2)

Transportation:

To repair or replace bulkhead and piers, for overnight dockage, charter, and tour boats. Build a boardwalk along the waterfront of Main Street and pedestrian walkways from the waterfront to Main Street. Determine placement for bike paths in this area and connect to other bike paths identified in the Town's bike plan.

Strategy:

1. Apply for state grants from VDOT.
2. Lease boat slips to offset cost and upkeep.
3. Obtain easements from adjoining property owners for a waterfront boardwalk.

Objective: (Phase 3)

Appearance:

To encourage façade improvements for Main Street properties, underground utilities from Cropper Street to Maddox Blvd. with new sidewalks, lighting, landscaping and a new gateway to the island.

Strategy:

1. Create a low interest loan pool by the local banks.
2. Create tax incentives for property owners that are willing to make improvements.
3. Apply for state grants from VDOT to bury utility lines and install new lighting.

C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Balanced year-round economy

Strategy:

1. Promote more year-round economic activity. Ensure economic vitality while protecting historic integrity.
2. Promote sound local economies by conserving the Island's unique values and protecting them from developments that may cause irreversible damage. The Island's natural attributes and its heritage are its most valuable economic resources. Promote development that enhances the environmental, historic and scenic qualities of the Island. Promote a healthy coastal environment to foster economic vitality.
3. Encourage efforts to diversify the Island economy within the quality and character of Chincoteague Island.
4. Give top priority to year-round job opportunities for permanent Island residents and increase the Island's self-sufficiency. Diversify the economic base, so that the Island will be less reliant on the tourist trade.
5. Private initiatives will influence the future of the Island at least as much as government regulations. Encourage creative and environmentally sound economic initiatives. Ensure that regulations affecting small businesses do not cause unnecessary burdens. Review regulations that might

- discourage new small business start-ups.
6. Where appropriate, encourage water-dependent maritime uses of coastal land.
 7. Promote necessary economic support for sport and commercial fishing.
 8. Promote and encourage relationships between Local Government and NASA Administration.

2. Tourism, real estate and seasonal businesses

Strategy:

1. Chincoteague Island is a nature resort whose attraction is based on its environmental quality and its natural beauty. Investment in these resources is essential to a healthy economy.
2. The Island's qualities should be preserved for summer residents, visitors and taxpayers, as well as for those who live on Chincoteague Island year-round.
3. Foster a more welcoming attitude towards visitors. Develop information and welcoming facilities both on- and off- Island. Recognize the importance of the summer economy as a base for the year-round economy and manage it through public and private actions including infrastructure and capital planning. Educate the public about the tourist economy.
4. Foster economic development that costs least in Island resources and puts the most back into the local economy.
5. Both sport and commercial fishing are part of the essence of the tourist experience of Chincoteague Island and generate a substantial local economy compatible with the protection of Island resources. Opportunities for direct participation in the Island's natural environment through activities such as fishing, boating, swimming, beachcombing, hiking, biking, horseback riding and shopping for local products make Chincoteague Island a unique place to visit.

3. Encourage economic impact study

Strategy:

1. Encourage the Commissioning of an economic impact study be performed which may include:
 - a. Economic Baseline Study Update – document levels of economic levels of economic activity in Island business. Look for measures of growth such as sales tax figures, bank and insurance activity, employment and unemployment, commercial utilities accounts, licenses granted. Plot trends in economic activity yearly and project future areas of growth. Find stable, sustainable level of economic activity based on long-term trends rather than boom-and-bust cycles. Study the income generated by different Island industries and identify industries that recycle their income

back into the Island economy.

- b. Year-Round Employment – Document year-round employment: numbers of jobs by industry.
- c. Alternative Trades – Research other examples of resort and rural communities for possible new industries and types of employment.
- d. Crafts Cooperatives – Encourage local outlets for Island crafts, especially where opportunities for Island artisans can be encouraged.
- e. Commercial Rents – Study the range of rents paid and develop measures to offset costs for year-round businesses.
- f. Local Investment – Encourage businesses to invest through local institutions, to use local labor and materials and to patronize Island businesses. Identify purchasing and contracting that uses off-Island vendors and encourage the development of local sources.
- g. Manage Resources With Economic Value – Environmental, historical and recreational resources are the prime Island “export”. Maximize the potential of a clean environment, restore and protect historic buildings and areas, and manage and expand recreational uses.
- h. Develop Educational Programs to Strengthen Local Economy – Teach subjects that focus on Island heritage: history, environment, and marine-biology. Link with opportunities for hands-on experience and job awareness.
- i. Monitor Consumer Prices – Survey Island prices for consumer goods at regular intervals and inform public so that businesses can monitor themselves.
- j. Waterfront Resources – Encourage the development of waterfront zoning bylaws that are protective of coastal environments and their traditional Island uses.
- k. Local Management of Tourism – Town should continue to take some to the responsibility for some of the responsibility for ongoing planning tourist facilities including restrooms and for educational programs to better manage tourism.
- l. Cost Benefit Analysis of Tourist Economy – Study the impacts of each segment of the tourist economy, identify costs and benefits. Identify portions of the summer economy that should be encouraged.
- m. Educate – Educate the public about the tourist economy, through school programs community workshops and literature at arrival points.
- n. Make the Island More User-Friendly – Design specific features to orient and educate visitors including brochures, historic plaques and markers, transportation symbols, guidebooks.
- o. Marketing the Island to Specific Clientele – Pool resources to advertise with campaigns specifically designed to boost the desired parts of the economy (i.e. Birders / Nature Enthusiasts).
- p. Higher Education as an Industry – Explore the potential for high school and college level research and credit programs to attract off-season economic activity.

4. Fishing and Island seafood industries

Strategy:

1. Policies on Protecting the Island Seafood Industry.
2. Economic activities, which are positive additions to the rural Island environment shall be encouraged. Encourage boating and fishing activities for the well being of other parts of the Island economy, particularly tourism.
3. Seafood harvesting is an ancient determinant of the Island's character and land use. Ensure that it remains a visible part of the landscape. Protect this industry from changes in attitudes and ensure sufficient land is zoned for this activity. Prevent conflicts with residential land uses.
4. Create jobs for the skills and working habits of the year-round labor force, in industries, which will prudently utilize the Island's natural resources. Encourage the development of small-scale industries. Encourage aquaculture to sustain the commercial seafood economy.
5. Foster the local seafood and aquaculture economies for the benefit of the whole Island economy and character. The availability of local seafood as well as the opportunity to "catch" local seafood is essential features of the Island experience.
6. Recognize the importance of commercial and sport fisheries to the local economy.

5. Planning for commercial growth

Strategy:

1. Keep existing business districts vital and workable. Restore and renovate historic buildings as an alternative to new construction wherever possible. Support planned economic growth.
2. Encourage commercial development to match the scale and density of Island neighborhoods. Limit overall square footage, massing of individual buildings and expanses of paved areas to blend with the rural scale of the Island. Provide an appropriate rhythm of buildings along streetscapes with view corridors to the coast wherever possible. Consider the shadowing effects from buildings near public coastlines and parks.

Actions:

- a. Town Centers – Maintain services and year-round uses in existing Town commercial centers for pedestrian access and community identity. Address parking and traffic issues and monitor need for sewage treatment facilities.
- b. Town Center Streetscapes – Plan more downtown parks and design places to sit, Town squares for gathering, eating and resting. Develop standards for landscaping and view corridors in Town centers.
- c. Commercial Design Guidelines – Develop commercial design guidelines to

- protect rural and townscape character. Include guidelines for street furniture and landscaping.
- d. Preserve Town Character – Rehabilitate and re-use older structures to preserve the character and historic fabric of the Island.
 - e. Positive Images – Research historic footage of streetscapes for positive examples of Town character. Produce films and multi-media presentations on current Town character to emphasize positive examples.
 - f. Positive Incentives – Develop incentives to direct commercial growth to desired locations.
 - g. Home Businesses – Develop guidelines for home businesses to avoid conflicts with residential uses.

D. EDUCATION

GOAL:

Provide educational opportunities for all residents.

Objective:

Continue to provide, on the island, for the education of elementary, middle and high school age students.

Strategy:

1. Vigorously promote the continued island location of all three schools.
2. Promote the establishment of a clean and safe environment for all students.

Objective:

Provide programs for vocational education, adult education and remedial education.

Strategy:

1. Encourage the school board to explore the possibilities of locating vocational programs on the island. Facilitate the pairing of local businesses with the school board to achieve these programs.
2. Support the continuation of G.E.D. classes on the Island.
3. Promote remedial programs for which there appears to be a need.

Objective:

Offer college level courses on the island.

Strategy:

1. Explore with the ESCC the possibility of providing basic college level courses during the evening on the island.
2. In conjunction with any college level night classes, pursue the possibility of

offering continuing education courses.

E. HOUSING

GOAL:

Promote affordable, safe, decent and sanitary housing for every resident of the island.

Objective:

Promote an adequate mix of housing to suit the needs of local residents, including single-family detached dwellings, duplexes, town houses, apartments, condominiums and mobile homes.

Strategy:

1. Ensure that each type of housing, above, is listed as a permitted use in at least one district of the zoning ordinance.

Objective:

Limit building heights on residential and commercial structures not to exceed heights that would destroy the charm and uniqueness of the island.

Strategy:

1. Prohibit the building of structures exceeding three (3) stories in height.

Objective:

Rehabilitate dilapidated structures.

Strategy:

1. Identify dilapidated housing in town suitable for repair.
2. Encourage owners of such structures to rehabilitate them by providing information on programs, grants and other funding sources.
3. Continue membership in the Accomack/Northampton Planning District Commission and keep abreast of any programs they have identified to foster and/or finance upgraded housing.

Objective:

Promote the rehabilitation or demolition of structures, which are unsafe, or in a severe state of disrepair. Encourage, where practical and possible, the replacement of these structures with housing units.

Strategy:

1. Review and update and enforce the "Unsafe Structures" ordinance.

Objective:

Promote affordable housing and/or supervised independent apartments for the elderly.

Strategy:

1. Identify and work with a legitimate seniors group toward the accomplishment of this objective.
2. Gather information on programs, grants and other funding sources available for assisting in determining the need.

F. LAND USE

GOAL:

Identify, delineate and protect significant land use patterns.

Objective:

Write, periodically review and amend as appropriate a comprehensive Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance.

Strategy:

1. Identify areas best suited to meet the future needs for residential and commercial activities as well as those best suited for conservation and parks. Make special note of those areas best able to support additional seafood activities.
2. Require in the development of any subdivision the use of Best Management Practices, as defined by our own local ordinance, to the maximum extent practicable, in order to reduce erosion, sediment and storm water runoff.
3. Zoning and subdivision ordinances are intended by law to implement this plan; therefore, future land use decisions regarding zoning and subdivision ordinance amendments, rezoning, special use permits and subdivision approvals should be consistent with the recommendations of this plan.
4. Include "grand fathering" clauses where appropriate.

GOAL:

Protect the integrity of all zoning districts with special emphasis on the residential areas of the Town.

Objective:

Enforce the intentions of the Comprehensive Plan and the requirements of the Zoning and Subdivision ordinances.

Strategy:

1. Once every year the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals shall hold a combined meeting for the sole purpose of reviewing issues of concern with the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances.

A. Advertise this annual meeting to encourage public participation.

B. Following this annual review, present a summation, prepared by a subcommittee consisting of one member from the Planning Commission, one member from the Board of Zoning Appeals and one staff member from the Town, of the findings to the governing body.

C. Include the Planning Commission's annual report with this review (in 3, above).

2. It is recommended that all potential and current members of the Planning Commission attend the state's certified Planning Commissioner Training.

3. The Planning Commission will develop and periodically update their own bylaws.

4. The Planning Commission will review and update the Comprehensive Plan on a five-year basis.

5. It is recommended that all potential and current members of the Board of Zoning Appeals attend the state's certified Board of Zoning Appeals Training.

6. The Board of Zoning Appeals will develop and periodically update their own bylaws.

7. Both the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals will encourage their members to attend periodic training sessions.

Objective:

Develop a drainage ordinance for the Island.

G. PUBLIC SAFETY

GOAL:

Provide for public safety.

Objective:

Promote the continual updating of an effective 911 system for the Town.

Objective:

Monitor the continuing review and updating of the Emergency Operations Plan for the Town including formulating plans for alternative means of emergency transportation should the bridges or the road to the mainland become impassible.

Objective:

Protect the Chincoteague access bridge from accidental damage by boat collision.

Objective:

Develop a plan and implement wireless 911 services at the Town's 911 Center.

GOAL:

Provide for effective, professional and encourage volunteer emergency services.

1. Police Services:

Objective:

Maintain effective police protection services for residents and visitors.

Objective:

Maintain a continuing liaison with State and County law enforcement agencies to insure enforcement of state motor vehicle laws along Route 175, the "Causeway".

2. Fire & Rescue Services:

Objective:

Support the Fire Company in its mission of providing responsive, quality fire protection and emergency medical services for the Island.

Objective:

Support the maintenance of a 24-hour quality ambulance services for all residents and visitors through the services of the Fire Company.

H. TRANSPORTATION

GOAL:

Promote a transportation system that will provide for the safe, efficient and convenient

movement of people and goods by road, water, and pedestrian means.

Objective:

Pursue the development of the new proposed drawbridge leading onto the Island at Maddox Blvd.

Objective:

Continue to work with VDOT to develop the most appropriate gateway to the Island considering both efficiency and aesthetics.

Objective:

Monitor the volume of traffic on secondary roads to ensure safe passage.

Objective:

Pursue the development of a plan to provide transient airport services at the nearby NASA base.

Objective:

Promote the development of a permanent hard surface lighted helicopter landing area for use in day or night for emergencies.

Objective:

Promote and encourage continued maintenance dredging of the Chincoteague Inlet, Chincoteague Channel and Inland Waterway.

Objective:

Promote efficient and safe waterfront areas for docking both large, deep-draft vessels, and smaller boats with both annual leasing and transient.

Objective:

Seek to ensure that handicapped and disabled residents and visitors are provided adequate means of access to all buildings and places.

Objective:

Promote the continued open flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic to existing facilities on Assateague Island.

Objective:

Create bike paths in areas susceptible to heavy bike traffic.

Objective:

Improve the existing right-of-ways by widening the roads providing greater shoulder access and installing sidewalks where appropriate.

V I. FUTURE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Exhibit 4 is the land use map as developed by Town Staff, the Planning Commission and citizen input. Exhibit 5 divides Chincoteague into 6 separate land use areas utilizing the aforementioned land use map. Each of the designated areas in Exhibit 5 has the potential to fulfill several land use needs of the Town as expressed in the Goals and Objectives: in fact, it is currently possible to find such a hodgepodge of commercial and residential mixes in almost all areas of the Island.

In addition to the Land Use Map, the Future Land Use divisions take into consideration the previous attempts to control development activities as expressed in the 1969 Zoning Ordinance for the old Town, the County Zoning Ordinance for the formerly unincorporated areas of the Island, and the 1992 Comprehensive Plan. The discussion of the highest and best use of land in each land use area also incorporates the sentiments expressed by the Planning Commission in the foregoing Goals and Objectives:

The Commission has attempted, with the following designated divisions, to delineate areas not so much by what can be found on each individual lot, but by the general trend of the entire area. We recognize that commercial activity can be found in an area that calls for future residential development, and in areas calling for future commercial development one can find residential uses. While this is unfortunate it is unavoidable. We can only hope that future development will more closely follow the intentions of the zoning and subdivision ordinances.

Our vision for the future of Chincoteague Is to have the bulk of all commercial establishments concentrated in one or two major "commercial corridors". The remaining portions of the Island would be devoted to varying densities of residential development, with a number of "grand fathered" activities occurring in each. Keeping In mind that there will probably be specified commercial activities allowed in an "R-3" type district and that most residential districts will continue to include home occupations, we would expect that in the long-term, residential districts would begin to look more residential and commercial districts will begin to look more commercial.

It should be pointed out that zoning districts have not, do not and probably will not specifically follow along the boundaries discussed under the Land Use Areas, below. In addition, this section is not intended to specify density, such as R1, marshlands, R2, etc., it merely sets forth the intended and expected future use for a particular area.

Any additional development should address the issue of storm water drainage. Only those developments which can show a net improvement of the affected drainage should be approved.

Finally, the renovation and repair of existing structures should be encouraged. Means to facilitate these activities should be explored and implemented. Such activity should result in a better-looking Island.

1. Marshlands Areas (#1):

Areas designated "1" on Exhibit 4 and shaded areas on Exhibit 1 are major marsh areas that surround Chincoteague. All the marshes have a high value for wildlife and waterfowl and are closely associated with fish spawning and nursery areas. They also help to prevent erosion, are important to the shellfish industry, and help keep the shoreline stable. These areas are generally marshy and during some of the higher tides may even be underwater. A number of such areas have been identified around the Island.

Future Land Use: No development is expected in these areas. The Commission would like to suggest that the maintenance of access to these areas (and to the federal areas in 2, below) be encouraged by the Town.

2. North End Of Island (#2):

The northern 25% (approximately) of the Island is owned by the federal government and is part of the wildlife refuge. A large proportion of this area is marshlands but it is not designated as such on the use map because total control is exercised by the federal government.

Future Land Use: Considering the government's current policy regarding areas designated as refuges, it is highly unlikely that this area will ever be available for any kind of local development. Again, access to this area should be encouraged.

3. Taylor Street east to and including Piney Island north to federal property at Wildcat and west to Chincoteague Bay. This area is generally residential with some commercial establishments and schools scattered throughout.

Future Land Use: This area is zoned predominantly residential with some commercial and agricultural areas. The Commission recommends that the publicly owned open areas surrounding the Municipal Center, Community Center, and School Board property be used to provide educational, recreational and natural areas. For this reason current land use should continue.

4. West or waterside side of Main St. from harbor (area includes harbor), north to Taylor St., the east or fast land side of Main St. from Cropper St. to Maddox Blvd., turning east along both sides of Maddox Blvd. to the Assateague bridge, (#4):

The majority of this corridor is clearly commercial with the exception of the split

residential lots along the southern end of Main St. (These residential lots tend to have their bulk on the east side of Main with a smaller portion of the lot on the west side of the street.)

Future Land Use: This corridor should remain the primary commercial corridor on the Island. Future commercial development should be in this area.

In order to bring about the highest and best use of the land in this area, and to improve the potential of already developed land, the following policies are recommended:

A. Pedestrian use of this area should be encouraged by maintaining and improving pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks, street crossings, lighting, appropriate landscaping and similar outdoor street furnishings.

B. Traffic circulation and parking facilities are prime concerns for this area. Even without further growth, parking in particular is critical. New development must provide parking facilities adequate for the establishment.

C. Existing facilities, which are not being used, should not be allowed to deteriorate into unsafe structures. The Main Street Revitalization Committee is working on the Chincoteague Revitalization Plan for the overall improvement of the downtown area.

D. The 1982 and 2001 Chincoteague Revitalization Plans should be reviewed and given consideration for the overall improvement of the downtown area.

5. East Side Dr. and portions of Church St. (#5):

Following around East Side Dr. in a generally northerly direction from Memorial Park on the south to Tarr Lane, and on the parcel of land on the opposite side of the street known as Grand Bay Court to Pointer Lane on the south side of East Side Dr.

This area is generally utilized for commercial purposes.

Future Land Use: This area should continue to be developed for commercial purposes.

6. Chicken City Rd. from Maddox Blvd. to Church St. - (#6):

This area has a mix of commercial and residential uses including some "R-3" or mixed commercial / residential areas uses.

Future Land Use: The lots along this street are currently being used primarily for commercial enterprises. The Commission feels that this could be a commercial "growth" area and that it could also be part of a connecting corridor for the

commercial activities along Maddox and East Side.

Accordingly we anticipate that the future development along this street would be best served by commercial development.

7. Remainder of Island (#7):

The predominant use of property on the rest of the Island is for residential purposes. Admittedly there are numerous commercial activities occurring all over the Island with some clustering. The Commission recommends, though, that rather than plan for these areas to grow and expand, all such activities be encouraged to relocate to the above described commercial corridors. This in no way infringes on the right of an existing business to continue nor does it take away the creation of new home occupations where allowed.

There are a lot of homes available for rent throughout the residential districts on the Island. While this is defined as a commercial activity the Commission feels that under certain conditions this activity is usually appropriate in residential districts.

Future Land Use: Development outside of commercial corridors should be restricted to varying kinds of residential development, perhaps with some low density commercial development allowed in a transitional district such as our current "R-3". Safeguards should be developed throughout the Island for areas where the larger fresh and salt water ponds and drainage canals are located. There will continue to be a demand for new and renovated housing throughout the Island. While such construction should be encouraged more emphasis should be given to the subsequent Impact on others of such activity.

8. Seafood Industry

Of particular interest to the Commission and the community is the protection of the traditional, waterfront seafood Industry which has played such a large part in Chincoteague's past. The Commission proposes to provide for the protection and continuation of this industry throughout the different zones by the grandfathering of existing activities or by some sort of special use permit if the activity is proposed.

This Issue will be specifically addressed in the new zoning ordinance.

VIII. SUMMARY

There are several statements in the 2001 Comprehensive Plan which the Planning Commission identifies as Requests for Action.

Listed below for the reader's convenience and easy reference, are those items which should be addressed by the Town as soon as possible.

1. INVENTORY OF NATURAL FEATURES-SURFACE WATER: Filling of ditches important to the Island's drainage should not occur, in fact the Commission recommends that this kind of activity be controlled by an ordinance or other developmental/maintenance tool (page 14)
2. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND UTILITIES-DRAINAGE: Due to low elevation, proper drainage requires constant attention...(3). an ordinance should be written and adopted to control the filling in of remaining drainage channels (page 15)
3. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND UTILITIES -RECREATION FACILITIES: Town should consider one or more public piers on both sides of the island. (Page 22) The town should pursue the possibility of turning other public lands into recreational areas (page 23).
4. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND UTILITIES-WATER: The Commission suggests that the Town review options regarding the construction of additional storage capacity for the water system (page 29).
5. INVENTORY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FACTORS-VACANT LAND: At present some of the vacant land in Town serves to drain storm water. It is crucial that future development criteria, particularly in the larger tracts or where higher than normal density is proposed, adequately address issue of wastewater and drainage (page 40).
6. GOALS - COMMUNITY FACILITIES: Capital Improvement Program
Commission recommends that the Town adopt a Capital Improvement Program to assist it in the proper implementation and management of its planning and budgeting (page 46).

In addition to the above stated action items, the 2001 Comprehensive Plan contains many goals, objectives, and strategies for Chincoteague's future preservation, maintenance, growth, and development. Several categories are updated and are historically included in each revised Comprehensive Plan but a few new important categories have been added such as Main Street Revitalization and Economic Development. Most of the additional action items are contained in pages 46-62. Since the pages are numerous and continuous we have not included them in the above summary, however the Planning Commission wishes to stress the importance of including them in the Town's plans.

IX. EXHIBITS

EXHIBIT 1

MARSHLANDS

EXHIBIT 2

FASTLAND SOILS MAP

EXHIBIT 3

SOILS MORE SUITABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT

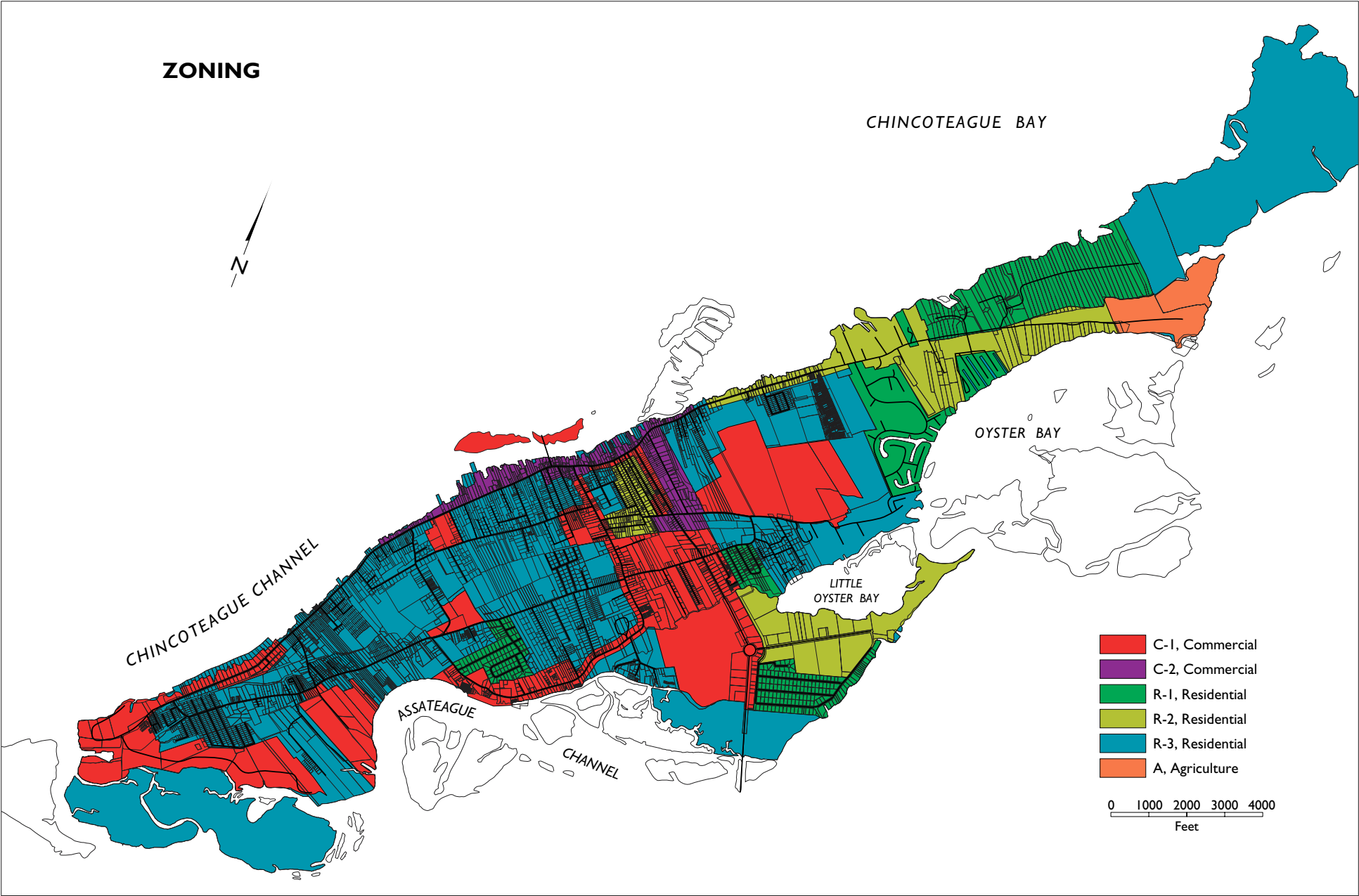
EXHIBIT 4

CURRENT LAND USE

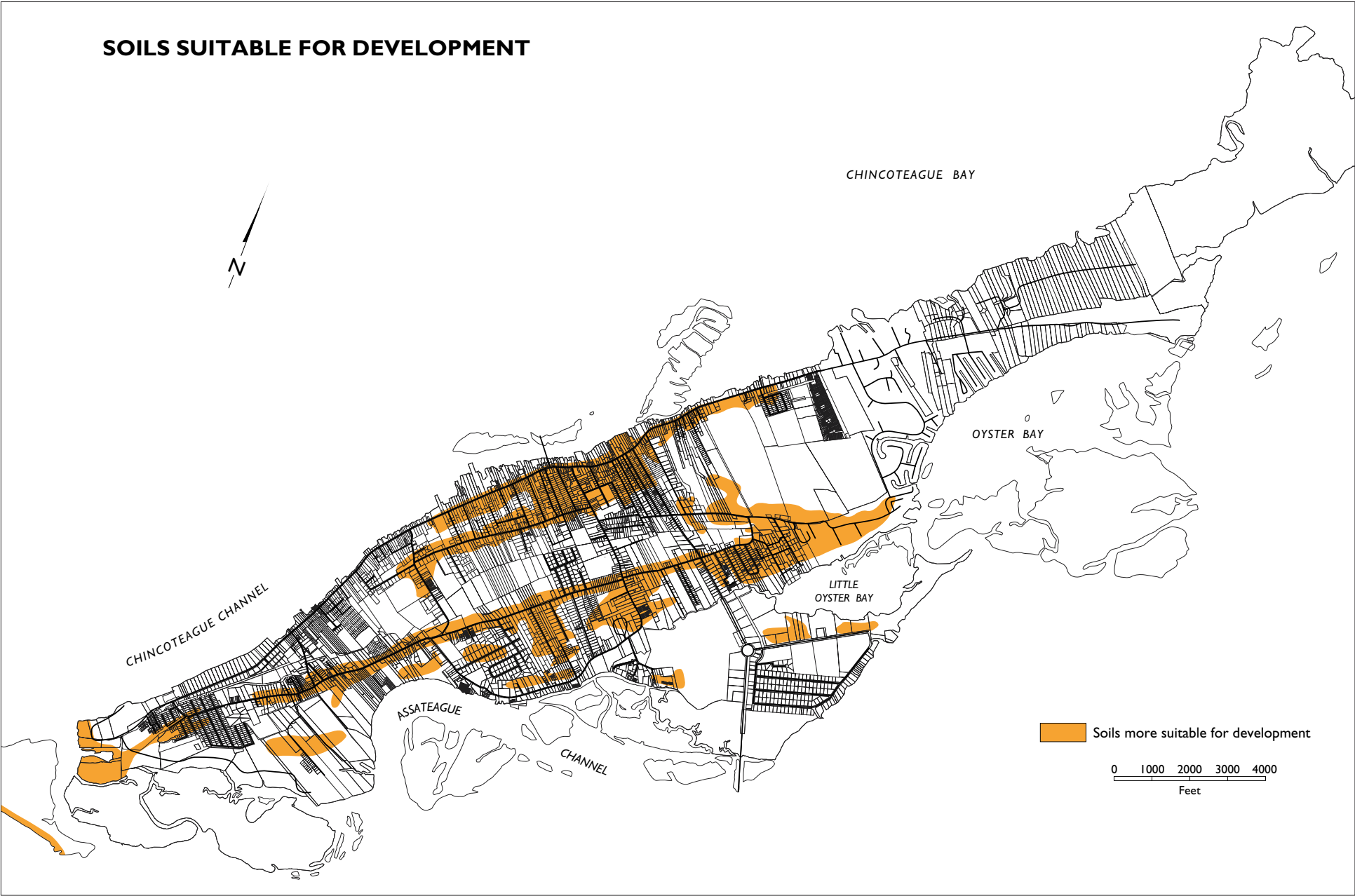
EXHIBIT 5

FUTURE LAND USE

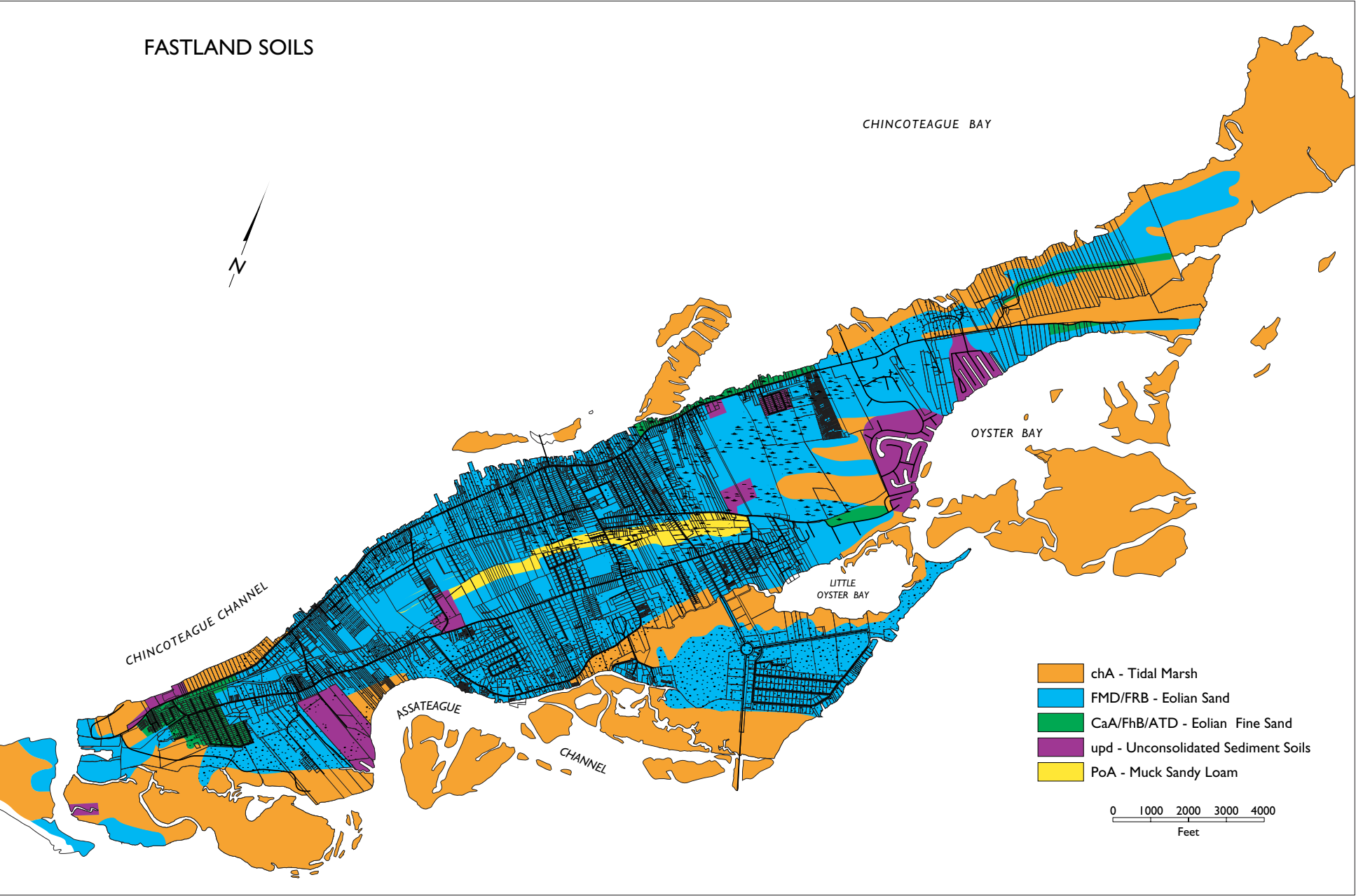
ZONING



SOILS SUITABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT



FASTLAND SOILS



MARSHLAND

CHINCOTEAGUE BAY



CHINCOTEAGUE CHANNEL

OYSTER BAY

LITTLE OYSTER BAY

ASSATEAGUE CHANNEL

Marshland

